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One Minute Ideas

Achieving Potential

January 2010

In this month's edition of our monthly newsletter "Achieving Potential," we highlight public speaking, self awareness and communication.

We coach individuals and organizations and help them achieve their true potential.

The Importance of Public Speaking

Public speaking is presenting your thoughts and feelings in a meaningful way. Often the wrong perception that only people involved in sales, marketing, or mass media need to learn public speaking is seen. However, the truth is that individuals from all walks of life have to speak in public at one time or the other. A kid reciting a poem in school or citizens expressing their opinions on any national issues or the president of a company addressing the staff are all different forms of public speaking.



Importance of Public Speaking

Public speaking is important for various reasons. Here, we have discussed on how learning public speaking techniques will help you in various facets of your life.

Improves Communication Skills

Public speaking is interrelated with communication skills and can be described as a form of communication. Public speaking does not always mean that you have to give a speech to a large audience. When you go for an interview, and speak to a group of interviewers or when you are giving a class presentation; all these are also a form of public speaking. In such situations, if you have the ability to communicate properly, it can help you shape up your future.

The Silent Side of Communicating

Whether negotiating the biggest deal of your career, coaching your team, or describing a project, keep your ears open. Otherwise, you may talk yourself right out of the room.

To be a better listener:

- **Try not to judge.** Even if you disagree with what's being said or the way it's presented, resist planning a rebuttal. Focus on understanding the message, not critiquing the messenger.

- **Commit your full attention** as soon as the other person starts to speak, not just when you hear a word or phrase that interests you.

- **Do whatever it takes** to limit distractions.

Examples: Suspend incoming phone calls, remove unnecessary papers from your desktop, or meet in a neutral area, such as a conference room.

Tip: If you're entering a room, ask the speaker to wait until you're both comfortable to start the conversation. In addition, extend the same courtesy when someone comes to your office.

Helps to Overcome Fear

Surveys have revealed that most people are afraid of public speaking more than their fear of death. You can reduce your anxiety to a large extent, if you gather a thorough knowledge of the subject matter on which you are going to speak. As a result, when you face the audience you just have to share with them whatever you have learned.

The more you practice public speaking, you will realize your anxieties and fears associated with it going down quite remarkably. Therefore, practice in front of a group of friends who can help you identify your weak areas and help you work upon them.

Helps in Personality Development

When you successfully deliver a good speech, the kind of personal satisfaction you experience is unparalleled. It gives you a sense of self-worthiness. A positive response from the audience can help you feel more confident. Thus, it can bring about a lot of improvement in your overall personality.

Improves Relationships

Once you develop good public speaking skills, a marked improvement can be seen in your interpersonal skills, which in turn, will help you maintain a healthy relationship with your friends and members of your family. Even in your professional life, an effective interaction with your boss, clients, or subordinates will help you enhance the possibility of your advancement in your chosen profession.

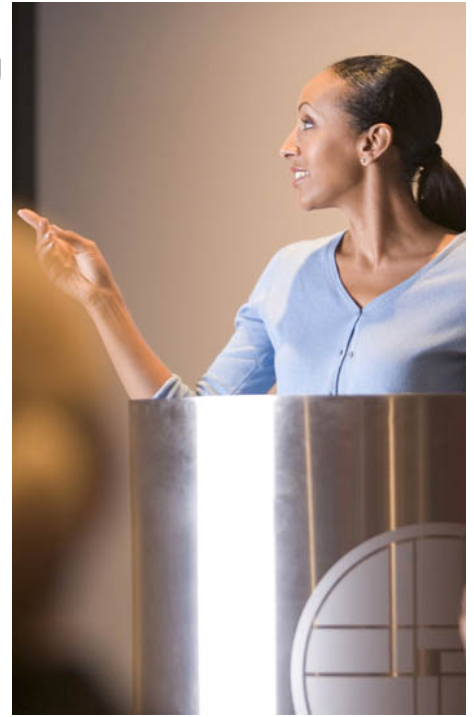
Therefore, at any point of time in your life, if you get an opportunity to learn public speaking skills, grab it without giving it any second thought. Once you learn them, make sure you use public speaking skills as often as possible, as you can sharpen the skills further by means of more practice. The most distinguishing feature of public speaking is to deliver it with full confidence, credibility, and conviction. However, when public speaking is not done properly, there is a possibility of miscommunication that can lead to a lot of misconceptions.

By Bidisha Mukherjee.

Source: Negotiate Like the Pros, by John Patrick Dolan, Berkley Publishing Group, New York, NY 10016.

Three Tips for Promoting Your Business Through Public Speaking

If you're a savvy marketer, you've got all kinds of clever ways to get the word out about your business. You might have a blog or a customer newsletter, take out paid ads in newspapers and magazines, or submit press releases when you have news. You might donate products or services to charity, use free directories, have a page on MySpace, or offer free consultations.



There are myriad free and low-cost ways to promote your business. Have you considered public speaking? Public speaking includes not just giving speeches, but also attending mixers, networking events, and referrals groups. Public speaking is a free and easy way to promote your business. Here are some ways to make it work for you.

Pointer 1: Make friends and build relationships through networking

Attending networking events can be nerve-racking, especially when you don't know a single person in the room. You see people standing around in groups and you wonder, "How am I ever going to break in?"

Networking is about making connections and building relationships, not about throwing your business card at anyone who will take it. How you present yourself at these events (and any time you talk about your business) is how people will remember you and your business. Make an effort to get to know people and find out how you can be a resource to them in ways that might or might not include your business.

When you enter the room, look for the host. She can point out people for you to meet or introduce you to someone you don't know. This is the host's job, so take advantage of it.

A good way to be indispensable at a networking event is to act like you are the host. When you see someone standing alone or looking uncomfortable, take the opportunity to introduce yourself and strike up a conversation. Put others' comfort before your own and you will be making friends in no time. Show confidence on the outside, even if you don't feel it inside. Put out your hand and introduce yourself to people. It gets easier the more you do it, and others will

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appreciate that you took the initiative!

Keep moving. If you talk to only one person all evening, you're not meeting anyone else! To exit a conversation, say that you're going to get another drink, or find the restroom, or that you see someone you need to talk to. Or just say "Excuse me," and walk away. It's not always comfortable finding a way to leave a conversation, but it's not at all rude.

After the event, stay in touch with the people you've met. Send an e-mail or make a call to say you enjoyed meeting them. When you come across information you think they'd be interested in, send it along. Cultivate those relationships; you never know how or when they might bear fruit.

Pointer 2: Offer your services as a speaker

Companies all over your town are looking for speakers. Some companies offer brown bag lunch educational sessions, some need to train specific departments on your subject matter, and some are having retreats or all-staff meetings where seminar speakers are needed. How can you tap into this abundance of speaking opportunities?

Contact businesses, nonprofits, and associations in your community by e-mail, or call to get information about their needs. Provide them with professional marketing materials if they ask; at minimum, have a website they can refer to for more information. Tell them about your expertise and most significantly, how you can help them. Talk benefits, not features: what will be the benefits to their company of having you as a speaker?

Once you have secured the speaking engagement, do your research. Ask the organizer for information about your audience. What do they already know about your topic? Are they beginners or advanced? How will your presentation help them in their jobs? How many people will be there? Collect questions in advance from the group so you can be prepared to address those needs.

When you practice your presentation, you will most likely finish faster than when you speak to the group; make sure to take this into account and build in a time cushion. Audiences love being let out early, but hate being let out late!

Your presentation need cover no more than three main points. It's okay not to share every single thing you know about your topic. After all, you'd like to leave the audience wanting more-more information about how you can help them!

Be approachable and friendly; greet people before your talk and stick around afterward to chat.

Most importantly-give them relevant, practical information that they can use right away. No one likes to give up an hour of work time for a speaker who tells them nothing new and nothing they can use.

Pointer 3: Promote your business by not promoting it

There's a trick to promoting your business by public speaking, and it has a lot to do with not talking about your business.

When you're at a networking event, show more interest in others than in yourself. Your goal is to build relationships, which doesn't happen if you talk incessantly about yourself. And it will never happen if, while talking to one person, you spend your time looking around for someone better.

What can you offer others that's not about you but is truly about helping them succeed? How can you be listening for what they need instead of waiting to talk about yourself?

It's especially important to limit your promotion when giving a presentation. If you sound like your talk is one long commercial, you will not be asked back, and you will not gain new clients. Say what you do and the name of your company. It's even okay to throw in some examples that involve clients, but be very careful not to cross the line into advertising.

Be a resource to people. Teach them something new. Leave them wanting more. And make sure to bring your marketing materials and business cards, so they can find you later.

Use public speaking like any other marketing tool-it's fun, easy, and free, and the connections you'll make are priceless.

By Lisa Braithwaite. Connections Newsletter, Research Associates Corporation.

The Four Phases of Growth

Even if you have great natural ability, it takes time to become a leader, says John Maxwell.

Maxwell, who founded four companies and has spent 30 years in various leadership roles, says you need time to go through four phases of growth:

1. "You don't know what you don't know." To start on the leadership path, you must realize that leadership is influence. And everybody - including you - tries to influence others every day. If you accept that fact, you've reached an important point on the way to becoming a leader: You realize you need to know more about how influence works.
2. "I know what I don't know." You'll usually find yourself in this phase after you've been thrust into a leader's role. Now you know for sure that you need to learn more about influence. So start to gather resources, attend

seminars, take courses and talk to leaders in your field.

3. "I grow, and I know it starts to show." At this point, others begin to notice - and comment on - something about you that says you're on your way to becoming a leader. But realize it won't happen as quickly as you'd like. It will occur according to the "Law of Process." In five years, your influence will increase. In 10, you'll be an effective leader. And in 20 years - if you've continued your growth - others will be asking you to show them how to lead.

4. "I simply go because of what I know." This is when all your hard work and willingness to learn - and teach others - pays off. Your leadership becomes almost automatic. But you can't get there without paying the price of lifelong learning and being patient enough to let the "Law of Process" work.

Suggestion: Think of becoming a leader as like investing in the stock market: If you hope to amass a fortune in one day, you won't succeed. But if you start learning today, you'll be ready to lead when the time comes.

Adapted from The Manager's Edge. Original Source: The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You, by John C. Maxwell, Thomas Nelson Publishers Inc., Nelson Place, Nashville, TN 3721

Motivational Quotes

"Speech is power: speech is to persuade, to convert, to compel."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

"The average person puts only 25 percent of his energy and ability into his work. The world takes off its hat to those who put in more than 50 percent of their capacity, and stands on its head for those few and far between souls who devote 100 percent."

- Andrew Carnegie

"You cannot build a better world without improving the individuals. To that end, each of us must work for (our) own improvement."

- Marie Curie

For results you can count on, contact Performance Development Strategies, LLC at 914-953-4458 or Email: grant@pdstrategies.com

Make it a GREAT day,

Grant Schneider
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